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Grace Heidbreder

Iowa State College

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The Christmas Bird

By GRACE HEIDBREDER

Long years ago the proverbial goose of today's Christmas was valued as a delicacy by the ancient Egyptians and the people inhabiting Briton. At the time of Julius Caesar's invasion into Briton the bird was a great favorite with the people of that land. He took the goose back to Rome where for a long time it was regarded as a sacred bird. From Rome the bird was taken into France and from there to other countries of Europe. It came to America with our forefathers who established the custom of goose as the "Christmas Bird." The longevity of the goose as a favored meat is due to the attractiveness of the flesh of the bird. As in all meats there are good meat and bad meat, and the goose intended for food has certain specifications.

The points to be considered in the selection of the goose are not very different from those of other fowl. In a dressed fowl the most satisfactory test is to have the breast bone pliable and in a live bird the best test is age. A goose is at its best a little under or a little over one year. When buying a goose it is essential to know the size in relation to the number of guests to be served. The average size serving is one-quarter pound of edible meat, and it is possible that fat and refuse will average about three-quarters of a pound. A twelve pound goose will serve from eight to ten people. It is possible to save the fat which when rendered makes very delicious frying fat. Because of this large amount of fat it is necessary to develop the flavor of the flesh with seasonings.

As any other fowl the goose must be drawn and trimmed. Many famous chefs advocate leaving the lungs or "soal" adhering to the chest walls. However this is a matter of choice. It is very essential to have the fowl free from all down to prevent any danger of a "feathery" taste. Fannie Merritt Farmer advocates washing with soapy water after singeing as the safest means of preventing this undesirable taste.

There are several stuffings adapted to goose meat. The point to remember in

the choice of a filling is to have it as free from fat as possible. The chestnut stuffing has always been popular for the Christmas goose, but other suggestions are apple, potato, rice bread, or cracker stuffings. The consistencies may vary according to personal tastes. Care should be exercised to have the stuffing well flavored but not too rich. After the bird is stuffed for roasting it should be placed in a hot oven for one-half hour or until it is well seared. At this time it is possible to pour off some of the excess fat. Basting should be done from time to time with some non-fat material, either water or a mixture of flour and water. Unless the goose is extremely old 20 minutes for each pound is sufficient time for cooking.

Altho the meat is the big item in the Christmas menu with its preparation the meal is only partially prepared. The other dishes must balance with the goose and should be appropriate for the Christmas season. If a first course is desired it may be either a fruit or fish cocktail or a clear well-seasoned consommé. A variation of the ordinary mashed potato is the potato apple or pear which is prepared by mashed potatoes molded into the shape of pears or apples dipped in egg, a clove on the top to form the stem, colored with vegetable coloring and then placed in the oven to heat. These potatoes are very satisfactorily prepared in advance except for the reheating which may be done just before serving.

In the choice of a vegetable and trimmings, color and season as well as flavor are important factors. It is well to choose a creamed vegetable because of its adaptability to goose meat. Possibilities are cauliflower, brussels sprouts, white cooking onions, turnips or a good grade of canned peas or asparagus. Celery and green olives add color and flavor to the menu. It was a very old custom to serve apple sauce with goose and a very delightful digression from this feature is to prepare a well seasoned apple sauce of grimes golden or greenings, coloring the sauce green and freezing it.

bert to serve with the dinner course. Cranberry sherbert may be substituted for the apple or the cranberries may be served as sauce or jelly.

The salad may be served either with the dinner course or as a separate course. For a simple salad, head lettuce with thousand island dressing is easily prepared or an apple and celery combination. It is possible to have a very delicious frozen salad from a good grade of canned fruit salad. Remove the paper from the can—this is a very important point—and pack the can in salt and ice for three hours. The salad is removed from the can, sliced and served on lettuce leaves with desired dressing.

The plum pudding and its first cousin the mince pie, are both direct descendants of the old Teutonic "blood pudding" or sausage, which differs from the common sausage because it was sweetened and had plums in it. Of late years it has been baked in crusts and thus our mince-meat pie has evolved. Substitutes for these when desired are date pudding, fig pudding, or Krummal Torta which is made with 2 eggs, beaten until light, 1 cup of sugar, 1-2 cup bread crumbs, 1 cup chopped dates, 1 cup chopped nuts, and 1 teaspoon baking powder mixed well together and baked in a slow oven three-fourths of an hour. Cut in squares and serve alone or with whipped cream.

The "Christmas Bird" is the primary consideration in the planning of the meal for Christmas dinner, but it is also necessary to consider when planning, the number of guests to be served, the proper dish to give the goose best flavor and the appropriateness of the dish as to season and then the amount of time the hostess has to prepare the meal and the amount of assistance she will receive. It is entirely possible to choose dishes that can be prepared early or even the day before and it is advantageous to choose food which is in season because seasonable food is not only more palatable but it is also more economical which is an important point to remember.

Helps from Our Extension Office

By VIOLA JAMMER

Playlets are becoming very effective as a means of popularizing an unpopular subject. They may be adapted as successfully to the interest of older people, as to children.

Gertrude Lynn, home management specialist, of the extension service, Iowa State College, directed a very fascinating play during the Iowa State Fair this fall to interest people in keeping home accounts. "Dollars and Sense" was written especially for the Iowa State Fair. Many of the incidents of the play are reproductions of actual experiences, reported by farm women, who have taken the five month course in Home Accounts and who have kept records during the past year. The play itself was then written by Mignon Quaw, the recreation extension specialist from Montana.

As a result of this play, 50 counties have requested copies. The play, in four episodes, represents two typical families. The one family, realizing the need and value of home accounting, have a very happy and prosperous home and business life. Contrasted with this, is the other family, who lives from day to day, working and worrying, never knowing where the money has been spent, or never planning for future advancement because of present circumstances. As the play proceeds, little incidents disclose the reason why. Finally the unhappy family comes in contact with a home demonstration agent who helps them to plan their future spending by assisting them to make an inventory of their past records. They see how disproportionate their spendings

have been and decide to plan a budget for their future happiness. The final scene shows them two years later, a progressive family, enjoying their income, and each member sharing a responsibility toward the family well being.

A "Home Account Book" for keeping family expenditures is being revised and may be secured in December. Two thousand copies of the Home Account Book, especially planned to meet the needs of farm homes, were sent out from the extension department during the last year.

A home economics bulletin No. 58 on Home Accounts, published in June 1924, may be had by writing to the Extension Service Department of Iowa State College. These bulletins contain recent and valuable information to people concerned with spending and saving problems.